

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 01169 01 OF 03 090423Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 010783

R 080656Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3153

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MOGADISCIO 1169

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SO, US, UR

SUBJECT: LIMITS OF SOMALI/SOVIET MILITARY COLLUSION: LESSON OF
BERBERA

1. A FEW QUESTIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN FULLY ANSWERED REGARDING SIAD'S HANDLING OF BERBERA AFFAIR, INCLUDING MEANING OF SIAD'S INVITATION TO AMERICAN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN. ANSWERS SO FAR PROVIDED ARE REplete WITH CONTRADICTIONS AND AMBIUITIES AND QUESTIONS CONTINUE TO PERPLEX DIPLOMATS, JOURNALISTS, AND SOMALIS AS WELL. WE OURSELVES ARE STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH THESE QUESTIONS IMPLY BECUASE CLEARER ANSWERS WOULD FAR BETTER EXPLAIN SUBSTANCE OF SOMALI-SOVIET MILITARY COLLABORATION IN REGION, AS WELL AS SIAD'S INTENTIONS TOWARDS US. ANSWERS WOULD ALSO GIVE US MUCH FIRMER GRIP ON US POLICY OPTIONS IN HORN.

2. WE HAVE SPECULATED EARLIER (MOGADISCIO 991) THAT SIAD MAY NOT RPT NOT HAVE BEEN AWARE OF REAL NATURE OF BERBERA MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY, WHICH HE BELIEVED SERVED SOMALI NAVY'S STYX MISSILE, AND THAT SIAD FULLY INTENDED THAT AMERICAN OBSERVERS SHOULD SEE EVERYTHING THEY NEEDED TO SEE AT BERBERA, EVEN IF HIS GENEROSITY NOT RPT NOT FULLY SHARED BY SOVIETS. THIS CONTINUES TO BE OUR INTERPRETATION AND IT IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY SIAD INTERVIEW WITH ITALIAN COMMUNIST AND JOURNALIST, PIETRO PETRUCCI, IN JULY AFRIQUE-ASIE, EXTRACTS OF WHICH HAVE JUST REACHED US VIA FBIS (JULY 24).

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PETRUCCI'S INTERVIEW PROVIDES IN SIAD'S OWN WORDS EXPLANATION WHICH

WE HAD DEDUCED TO DATE WHOLLY INTERMS OF SIAD'S ACTIONS IN HANDLING SENATOR BARTLETT'S VISIT.

3. PETRUCCI INTERVIEW WITH SIAD IS MORE THAN JUST OCCASIONAL PIECE OF AFRIQUE-ASIE JOURNALISM. PETRUCCI IS ADVISOR TO MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT SIAD PERSONALLY SENT FOR PETRUCCI, WITH WHOM HE HAS HAD LONG AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP, WHEN US CHARGES ABOUT SOVIET BASE AT BERBERA WERE AT PEAK, AFTER US PHOTOS HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN MEDIA, AND WHEN SIAD WAS ATTEMPTING BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT LAY BEHIND US ALLEGATIONS. INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE BEFORE US CONGRESSMEN HAD ARRIVED BUT AFTER INVITATIONS EXTENDED.

4. INZPETRUCCI INTERVIEW, SIAD IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE INTENDS PURSUE US-SOMALI DIALOGUE DESPITE BERBERA BASE ALLEGATIONS, THAT HE HAS WRITTEN LONG LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD REPEATING ASSURANCES ABOUT NATURE OF SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA GIVEN DURING THEIR BILATERAL TALKS IN WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER 1974, AND THAT HE HAS INVITED US SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN TO COME AND SEE FOR THEMSELVES WHAT EXISTS AT BERBERA. SIAD THEN CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT HE QTE WILL ASK MY AMERICAN GUESTS TO SHOW ME THIS BASE WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE ALLEGEDLY BUILT IN OUR COUNTRY WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEGE, BECUASE WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT UNQTE.

5. THIS IS FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THAT SIAD HIMSELF HAS PAIMPLIED THAT IF SOVIETS HAVE IN FACT BUILT SPECIAL BASE AT BERBERA, (I.E., FACILITY WHICH COULD ALARM US) SIAD AND SOMALIA KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT. AT NO TIME DURING SIAD'S CONVERSATIONS WITH EITHER SENATOR BARTLETT OR CONGRESSMEN STRATTON AND HIS GROUP DID HE SUGGEST THAT AMERICANS MIGHT DISCOVER SOMETHING ABOUT BERBERA OF WHICH SIAD UNQWARE. INSTEAD, SIAD GAVE ANOTHER TWIST TO INVITATION BY INSISTING THAT HIS REAL REASON WAS TO LET AMERICAN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN SEE FOR THEMSELVES SOMALIA'S TERRIBLE HUMAN PROBLEMS.

6. TAKEN BY ITSELF, SIAD COMMENT TO PETRUCCI MAY NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO MEAN VERY MUCH. TAKEN WITH SIAD'S ADMISSION TO US JOURNALISTS ON JULY 3 THAT HIS INVITATION TO AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS HAD A SPECIFIC QTE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, UNQTE, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENTS HERE, SIAD'S COMMENTS HELP CLARIFY
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MORE ACCURATELY HIS COLLABORATION WITH SOVIET UNION AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, HIS PERCEPTION OF US UNDERSTANDING OF SOVIET/SOMALI MILITARY RELATIONSHIP.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 080656Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3154

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 MOGADISCIO 1169

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7. WE HAVE LONG BEEN CONVINCED THAT SOVIET ADVISORS IN SOMALIA PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN SIAD'S UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN, IN INDIAN OCEAN AND IN MIDDLE EAST. ON BASIS OF SIAD'S ACTIONS, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE SIAD BELIEVE PRETTY MUCH WHAT IT WANTS HIM TO BELIEVE. WE HAVE REASON TO THINK THAT SOVIET UNION WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SIAD'S FEARS IN MID-1973 THAT ETHIOPIA, EGGED ON BY US AND ISRAELI ADVISORS, WOULD LAUNCH MILITARY STRIKE AGAINST SOMALIA (SIAD SENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT NIXON). WE ALSO SEE SOVIET HAND IN SIAD'S ACCUSATION IN OCTOBER, 1973 THAT US DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN

MIDDLE EAST FIGHTING, IN SIAD'S FEARS THAT US 7TH FLEET WOULD INTERVENE (HE AGAIN SENT LETTER TO PRESIDENT NIXON), AND HIS MORE RECENT OPPOSITION TO US MIDDLE EAST STEP-BY-STEP INITIATIVES (MOGADISCIO 353). SOVIETS HAVE ALSO BEEN SIAD'S MENTORS ON DIEGO GARCIA AND DANGER OF US FACILITY TO PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ON AFRICAN LITTORAL.

8. SOVIET ADVISORS HAVE, OF COURSE, PLAYED DOUBLE GAME WITH SIAD. ON ONE HAND, THEY HAVE ENCOURAGED SOVIALIST NATION BUILDING AT HOME, TO WHICH SIAD IS BASICALLY COMMITTED, INCLUDING RESTRAINT ON SOMALIA'S TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS IN OGADEN AND KENYA, WHILE AT SAME TIME THEY HAVE EXACERBATED SIAD'S FEARS OF US HOSTILITY TO SOMALIA AND US MACHINATIONS IN REGION. THEY HAVE EQUIPPED FGED WITH INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT AS RESULT,
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INCLUDING SAM-2'S, MIG-21'S AND NOW STYX MISSILES, WHICH HAVE DEFENSIVE PURPOSE FOR SOMALIA BUT ALSO PRATICAL ADVANTAGES FOR SOVIETS, WHO CAN DISCREETLY SHARE SOMALI FACILITIES TO SERVE SOVIET NAVAL AND AIRCRAFT NEEDS IN INDIAN OCEAN -- LIKE BERBERA MISSILE REWORK AND STORAGE FACILITY.

9. IF SOVIET ADVISORS IN SOMALIA HAVE BEEN AGGRESSIVELY SELF-SERVING IN INTERPRETING FOR SIAD US ACTIVITIES IN AREA, IT WOULD FOLLOW THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EQUALLY LOQUACIOUS IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF DETENTE FOR SIAD'S BENEFIT. DENTENTE HAS BEEN A FACTOR IN SOMALI REASONING ABOUT US/SOMALI RELATIONS SINCE AT LEAST MID-1975.

10. WHAT DID SOVIETS TELL SIAD ABOUT ADVANTAGES OF DETENTE FOR SOMALIA? WE WOULD AFEUME THAT THEY TOLD HIM US HAD ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE SOVIET ROLE IN SOMALIA AND THAT USSR HAD ALSO ACCEPTED US ROLE IN ETHIOPIA AND THAT BOTH POWERS WOULD UNDERTAKE TO DAMPEN POSSIBILITY OF CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. WHILE THIS IS SPECULATION ON OUR PART (FOR WHICH WE HAVE NO RPT NO DIRECT EVIDENCE), A SMALL BIT OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IS SUPPLIED BY COMMENT SIAD REPORTEDLY MADE TO PLF LEADER OSMAN SABBE IN PROMISING TO HELP PLF DESPITE ANY GREAT POWER AGREEMENT IN REGION (MOGADISCIO 675). SOVIET DIPLOMATS HAVE ALSO GONE OUT OF WAY TO REASSURE US ABOUT SOMALI INTENTIONS. IT IS PERHAPS ALSO SIGNIFICANT THAT SOMALI"SOVIET FRIENDSHIP TREATY, WHICH FINALLY FORMALIZED SOVIET/SOMALI ICATIONS, WAS SIGNED IN MOGADISCIO IN JWY, 1974 DURING PODGORNEY'S VISIT AND NOT LONG AFTER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. IN OCTOBER, 1974, PRESIDENT SIAD SPOKE WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN WASHINGTON, AND UPON HIS RETURN TO SOMALIA SEEMED GENUINELY CONVINCED THAT NEW ERA IN SOMALI-US RELATION WAS POSSIBLE. BLOOM WAS STILL ON SOMALI PERCEPTION OF DETENTE IN EARLY 1975 DURING CONGRESSMAN DIGGS' VISIT WHEN SIAD AS WELL AS TWO OF HIS VICE PRESIDENTS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED DETENTE IN EXPRESSING THEIR HOPE FOR NEW ERA IN US/SOMALI RELATIONS. IN JANUARY 1975, SIAD OFFERED DEFINITE POSSIBILITY OF US NAVAL VISIT TO SOMALIA.

11. IT IS INSTRUCTIVE THEN TO REEXAMINE SIAD'S HANDLING OF SOVIET BASE ISSUE AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, AS SPECULATIVE AS IT MAY BE. PRIOR TO PENTAGON CHARGES ABOUT SOVIET BASE AND RELEASE OF US RECONNAISSANCE PHOTOS, SIAD MAY HAVE WELL BELIEVED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN SOMALIA AND AT BERBERA KNOWN TO AND ACCEPTABLE TO US. HE HAD MOREOVER DENIED TO PRESIDENT FORD THAZD SOVIET HAD BASE FACILITIES. NEW PENTAGON ALLEGATIONS ABOUT BERBERA MISSILE FACILITY MUST THEREFORE HAVE BEEN BEWILDERING TO HIM, ESPECIALLY WHEN VIEWED IN CONTEXT OF SOVIET ASSURANCES ABOUT ACCEPTABILITY TO US OF SOVIET ROLE IN SOMALIA.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 080656Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3155

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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12. IF THIS IS INDEED SCENERIO, THEN IT FOLLOWS THAT SIAD'S INVITATION TO US SENATORS, CONGRESSMEN AND PENTAGON OFFICIALS WAS INTENDED TO SHOW TO US THAT SOMALIA HAD NOTHING TO CONCEAL AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO DEMONSTRATE THAT SIAD WAS NOT RPT NOT PARTY TO ANY SOVIET/US MISUNDERSTANDING AS RESULT OF SOVIETS SEEKING GREATER MILITARY ADVANTAGES IN SOMALIA THAN US -- AND SIAD -- COULD ENDORSE. IN SUM, SIAD WAS ATTEMPTING TO SHOW US THAT HE WAS NOT RPT NOT TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH ANY GREAT POWER DISPUTE IN HORN OVER MILITARY ADVANTAGES OBTAINED BY SOVIETS WHICH MIGHT COMPROMISE PEACE OF AREA OR INCREASE DIRECT US HOSTILITY TO SOMALIA.

13. SOMALI COUNTER ATTACKS IN PRESS WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED RELEASE IN WASHINGTON OF SENATOR BARTLETT'S REPORT, AS WELL AS SECOND NOTE OF PROTEST TO EMBASSY FOR ITS ROLE IN BERBERA AFFAIR, SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT SIAD IS NOW ANY LESS INTERESTED IN US UNDERSTANDING OF HIS SITUATION. WHAT HAS BEEN MISSING ON US SIDE, HOWEVER, IS BETTER RECOGNITION OF SIAD'S POSITION AND MORE POSITIVE GESTURE ON OUR PART WHICH MIGHT REINFORCE WHAT WE INTERPRET AS HIS DESIRE TO LIMIT MILITARY ADVANTAGES SEIZED BY USSR. WE CANNOT HOPE THAT SIAD WOULD DENY CERTAIN FACILITIES TO SOVIET NAVY AT BERBERA OR ELSEWHERE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT ANY JOINT US/ARAB ATTEMPT BY ECONOMIC MEANS TO DISLODGE SOVIETS IN SOMALIA WHOLLY UNREALISTIC, AS WELL AS UNWISE. BUT WE ALSO THINK US CAN BE SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SIAD'S

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RELUCTANCE TO CONCEDE TO SOVIETS MILITARY ADVANTAGES IN SOMALIA WHICH GO BEYOND SOMALI DEFENSIVE NEEDS AND WHICH MIGHT -- IN SIAD'S VIEW -- DIRECTLY INVOLVE SOMALIA IN GREAT POWER DISPUTE IN AREA.

14. WHILE SIAD PERCEPTION THAT HE COULD BE DRAGGED INTO US/ SOVIET MILITARY MIX-UP MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT EXTRAVAGANT TO US STRATEGIC THINKING, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT OVER YEARS SOVIET ABILITY TO ACHIEVE ITS ENDS IN SOMALIA HAS EMPLOYED SAME PRIMITIVE LOGIC. IF SIAD COULD BELIEVE THAT US WAS URGING ON ETHIOPIANS, THAT US HAD DIRECTLY INTERVENED IN MIDDLE EAST OR THAT DIEGO GARCIA CAN BECOME BASE FOR US STRIKE FORCE AGAINST AFRICAN LITTORAL, THEN HE IS ALSO CAPABLE OF BELIEVING SOMALIA MIGHT ITSELF BECOME MORE NAKED TARGET TO US AGGRESSION.

15. WE CONCLUDE THEN THAT WHILE WE PROBABLY POWERLESS AT THIS TIME TO CHANGE SIAD'S IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT OR HIS ALLIANCE WITH PROGRESSIVE WORLD SOCIALISM, WE MAY BE ABLE TO LIMIT ANY SPECIAL STRATEGIC MILITARY ADVANTAGES SOVIETS OBTAIN IN SOMALIA. THAT TO US IS MESSAGE SIAD HAS CONVEYED IN HIS HANDLING OF BERBERA AFFAIR. WE BELIEVE IT IS STILL VALID.

16. MOGADISCIO VIEWS ON POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION SUBJECT SEPTTEL. ONE WAY TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY WOULD BE TO GIVE AMBASSADOR ADDOU OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT SIAD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD. LOIGHRAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, LEGISLATORS, MILITARY BASES, MILITARY AGREEMENTS, BERBERA, INVITATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOGADI01169
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750275-0443
From: MOGADISCIO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750870/aaaacjpl.tel
Line Count: 309
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LIMITS OF SOMALI/SOVIET MILITARY COLLUSION: LESSON OF BERBERA
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SO, US, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006